

"Yasir Arafat's Revenge

# Behind Arab Terrorism

By HENRY J. TAYLOR

Arab terrorism, again headlined, begins with Palestinian guerrilla leader Yasir Arafat, alias Abu Ammar, whom I once went to see at his hideout in Amman, Jordan, and have written about. In all the Arab world no man's hands are more bloody than his.

Arafat is a broad-shouldered, rock-like man with a grip that is a crusher—a mercilessly cruel, evil character, zero Fahrenheit temperature. His tanned face is leathery, his mustache fierce and immense, his ancestral nose hooked, like a scimitar, and his daring brown eyes exchange glances as sharp as swords in the air.

He was holed up in a shabby room in an old house built in the cliffside. He had an automatic rifle on the table and was heavily guarded by camouflage-uniformed "militia." It was the moment of the Moslem prayer before sundown: *Salat li'asr*.

Arab etiquette demands that a host bid his guest "*mit ahlana wasah'lan*"—a hundred times welcome. Substituting *alf*—a thousand—for *mit*, a hundred—builds extravagance into the courtesy and makes it ironic, as all Mideast hands well know. He hit me with *alf* at once.

Arafat leads both Al Fatah, the largest Arab guerrilla commando group and the all-encompassing United Commando Command and operates the powerful, insidious Voice of Assifa radio, the "Voice of Storm," and the Cairo-based Voice of the Palestine Revolution radio, which blanket the Arab world.

His followers are drawn from the Palestine evictees, who now total about 2.5 million. They have had no political life. They are the moths; Arafat is the candle. They are the victims of two wars and the cause of another. For yesterday's Arab refugees are today's guerrillas who, in a great oversimplification, feel that Israel deprives them of their birthright.

*Inshallah* (God willing) is the key word and philosophy in the Arab world. And all Arabs are willing to pay high for what they call their *akhad taro*—their revenge.

Arafat and his followers call their Israel assault "*Intifada* (Struggle") and preach the war in terms of decades. He admitted to me that his

followers "can be mobilized only around the issue of fighting." But the movement is deeply at odds within itself. And this accounts for the Black September group in his Al Fatah which claims responsibility for the Munich Olympic Games horror.

It is led by Munzeer Salman Khalifah, 29, a Palestinian Arab formerly of Beirut. Khalifah himself calls Al Fatah "the mother organization." In September 1970 brave King Hussein ordered his army to battle the guerrillas in Jordan. He won the civil war militarily, but not politically. And Khalifah named his Black September group in protest against King Hussein's action.

In February it began striking European targets and our Central Intelligence Agency estimates that it has expanded from 150 to about 300 members, including members in Western Europe and Yugoslavia, with some 51 cells throughout West Germany alone.

The CIA has discovered members arriving at East Berlin's Schonfeld Airport and being smuggled into West Berlin. They use false passports and each cell is a self-contained secret: cell members do not know the members of the other cells. And the CIA is convinced that it was this group that received a

\$5-million ransom from the West German government last winter for a high-jacked Lufthansa jet, although Bonn has never stated to whom it was paid.

Arafat told me that he and his followers must move the destiny of Arab world negotiations out of the hands of the Arab governments and, by veto, into their own. The Arab world is unorganized, and probably unorganizable, and this militant veto power represents a force which even the best-organized Arab governments cannot ignore or suppress.

The Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev, recognizing the importance of this veto force, invited Arafat to Moscow. With me, Arafat was evasive about the results, saying only that "the hearts in Moscow are warm and the snow is cold." He clearly got recognition, however, as a power independent of the Arab governments.

It is a superb blend of terror and blackmail—unspeakably brutish and unspeakably violent—but the prospect is not visionary. The Arab governments are shot through with individuals whose real loyalties are to dissident factions. Arafat swoops down on the opportunity like a hawk.